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Gaius Glenn Atkins, D.D., L.H.D.
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My Christian Experience and Faith

E. Loleta Wood

November, 1946

[The MINISTER'S QUARTERLY has not generally published articles of a personal nature. But, writes the Scribe of the Council which ordained Miss Wood at Sioux City late last autumn, the Council was so impressed by her statement that they requested its publication. The statement itself explains why. It is a classic expression of a free faith in a totally consecrated life.—THE EDITOR]

I DO not remember when I did not want to be a missionary. This no doubt was due to Mother's dominating interest in the world-wide task of the Church. I read about and saw pictures of people in the far-away corners of the globe—and in those days the corners really were far away. Also I saw Mother struggle and sacrifice to raise money so that the good news of life might reach these far-away people. At some point in my childhood the idea entered my head that I could be one of the persons to carry the good news. I dreamed of going to various lands—China, Africa, South America, Alaska—but so far as I can recall I never dreamed of going to India.

Just as I do not recall the exact moment when I decided upon my life-work, so I do not recall any particular moment when I made the decision for a Christian life—though I can recall a number of times when I remade the decision. I cannot witness to any climactic conversion experience. Perhaps I absorbed my faith also from Mother. All that I know was that my growth in the things of the spirit was gradual and without any violent upheaval. I probably would have been at a loss to give any reason for my faith. While I was still in high school I began to teach in Sunday School. It was then that I made a conscious attempt to clarify my own thinking, so that I could speak with clearness to the children whom I taught.

High school, college, normal school, and then a year of teaching gave me the educational qualifications which would allow me to start out on the life-work to which I was sure that God had called me. I do not mean that I thought that the mission field was the only place where I could do my share in the work of the world. Nevertheless, the very ease with which the way opened up gave me no opportunity to doubt the wisdom of my choice. Even Father, who in his heart dreaded to see me go, did not try to deter me. Rather, he did everything to make my going a happy occasion.

I arrived in India in the midst of a disastrous famine and in time to witness the aftermath of the great influenza epidemic which swept the world in 1918. Thus I was plunged into an entirely new world where the physical and material needs were so appalling that I was compelled to rethink my gospel. In the very month of my arrival Gandhi began his Satyagraha Movement which has resulted in Indian independence only this year. The relation of the gospel message to the political aspirations of three hundred million people was another problem that forced upon me a rethinking of my message.

This rethinking was still in process two and one-half years later when the blow fell which seemed to shatter to bits all my life plans. Was this mysterious illness (it was several months before my illness was diagnosed as poliomyelitis) God's hand upon me turning me back? Had I been too confident that I recognized God's voice in my call to India when it was only my own personal desire? When almost the only muscle in the body that can move is the brain, a lot of ques-

tions can race through the mind in quick succession. They all went through my mind again and again.

I

It was during the slow voyage to America in the spring of 1922 that I found my answers. Lying on deck under the very expanse of the starry heavens, I felt that I could gaze into the very heart of the universe. And I found that heart good. All my questions became foolishness with the conviction that God does not—he cannot—do evil even for a good purpose. But his good purpose could make use of my life however shattered it might seem to be. That faith gave me hope through the time of waiting for the verdict of the doctors and the American Board. The seven and one-half years in America brought me many new and rich experiences at home and in the church and in school. I shall always be grateful for that period in my life. Yet I had a feeling that this was but an interlude and that India was not closed to me. And never before or since have I felt greater assurance of God's direction than when I returned to India in 1929.

In India the opportunity for service is so great and the demands made upon one's knowledge, wisdom and experience are so overwhelming that over and over again I have been confronted with the feeling of inadequacy. Although ignorance is not an insuperable barrier to the Kingdom of God, I believe with all good Congregationalists that an intelligent and reasonable faith is of greater value, not only for the one who holds it but also for the group in which he lives, than is a blind, irrational faith. Therefore, I aimed at the development of an intelligent faith in those whom I taught.

I mentioned above that I had to begin to clarify my own thinking in high-school when I was teaching others. It is this teaching of others which has compelled me again and again to clarify my thinking, to make more firm the groundwork of my teaching. I spent one furlough year (1935–36) at Oberlin studying content and methods of religious education. That period of study, instead of satisfying my needs, started me on a quest which led me again to the School of Theology for a more systematic study of our Christian Faith. The American Board very graciously granted my request for an extended furlough so that I might complete the theological studies for the B.D. degree.

II

The statement of faith which I shall attempt here is in no sense a complete and final document. My faith has changed with the experience of the years and I trust that by the grace of God it will continue to change. I pray for a mind open to receive new truth and for the ability to use the truth in the service of the Giver.

I believe in one God who is the creator of the universe. Creation was not by fiat; God is at work struggling for a perfect universe. I believe that there is no power or combination of powers which can defeat his holy will; ultimately his good purpose will be achieved. But God is not infinite in power. He is limited by the material with which he works, which is co-eternal with him. He is limited by his creation of free persons who may choose to act contrary to his will, and so temporarily frustrate his purpose. He is limited by his very nature; because he is perfectly good, it is impossible for him to do evil.

God is unlimited, infinite, in goodness and in love. In his perfect goodness, God seeks ever to control the forces within the universe and to use them for realizing the ideal universe. In his perfect love, God seeks to control men through their response to his outreaching love.

I believe that God created man in his own image so that man might share in the creative process. Whenever man loses his will in God's will he is able to help God in the conquest of evil and in the

creation of good. But "in his own image" means that God gave to man the power to choose the direction which his life shall take. Too often, instead of being creators with God in accordance with his will for the universe, men have set up goals of their own—goals which are self-centered rather than God-centered. It is inevitable that the direction of such lives runs counter to God's will. Yet desiring to see man reach the goal for which he was created, God constantly seeks to redeem him from his selfish choices to the way of life in consonance with his own perfect will.

But how is man to know the will of God? I believe that God has revealed himself in his creative activity in the universe. The Psalmist was able to say:

"The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament showeth his handiwork."

Scientists have made possible for us increasing understanding of God's handiwork and of its continuing progress. They have enlarged our horizons until we gaze in wonder at the vastness of the universe and stand in awe before the Mind which is the creator of all this order.

I believe that God has revealed himself in the events of history. But the completion of any given revelation depends upon its apprehension by man. Just as the beauty of sight or sound is unavailing until it reaches the mind through eye or ear, so revelation in order to be complete must find response in human mind. From time to time there have been those whose souls, more sensitive than their fellows', were able to apprehend God's purposive activity in history and to interpret this to their contemporaries. In the Bible we find the record—incomplete to be sure—of some of these sensitive souls. But that God spoke to men only as such infrequent intervals as these records show, who would dare to say? And although the canon of the Bible was closed many centuries ago, man cannot shut God up within the covers of a book. God continues to reveal himself in the events of history and to those souls who strive to know his will and to do it.

III

But God who is personal and who made man in his own image can reveal himself most perfectly in a person. We who call ourselves Christian believe that God has revealed himself most perfectly in Jesus Christ, although all are not agreed as to the exact manner of that revelation.

I cannot say that I believe that Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Any attempt to explain the relationship between God and Jesus meets with difficulty because there is no uniform understanding of that relationship in the New Testament. Yet a careful study of the gospel record points to the conclusion that Jesus considered himself the Messiah. That a supernatural birth was a prerequisite to messiahship there is nothing at all to indicate. Nor does the revelation of God in Jesus hinge upon the manner of his birth. It was not the manner of his birth which showed his oneness with God but the manner of his life even to his death on the cross.

The record of the very brief period of his life which comes down to us shows him concerned with but one thing: the reign of God in the lives of men. He desired control over men for but one purpose: that he might prepare them for God's coming reign. We find Matthew reporting of him: "Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Jesus exemplified in his own life this complete submission to the will of God. Because he submerged his own will so entirely in the stream of God's will, we can see most clearly in him the character of God in his dealings with men. In Jesus we see God who is righteous judge but also loving father; God who demands obedience to his will yet will not force that obedience nor ac-

cept it unless it is given freely; God who guarantees no outward comforts but promises inward peace and security.

Through Jesus we find the way to a new relationship with God, based on both his ethical demands and his forgiving love. Our heritage from the Hebrews is the firm conviction that God makes moral demands upon his children. The Hebrews also came to the conclusion that human beings were unable to fulfill these moral demands. But Christ reveals the love of God which reaches out to find us when we are lost in the maze of our own selfishness. This graciousness of God is the most vital point, the unique point, in the revelation of God in Christ. God's forgiving love goes out toward man even before he seeks it or realizes that he needs it. Jesus taught this by parable; but also by his constant seeking out of publicans, of sinners, of those who made no pretense of being God-seekers. And when on the cross he forgave those who wanted nothing of his forgiveness, he became the final, *i.e.*, the highest, expression of God's graciousness toward men. To those who respond to this gracious love, God gives grace to meet his ethical demands.

I do not believe that God willed that Jesus should die on the cross. I do believe that God willed that Jesus should stand firm on the truth of his message even though it meant that evil men would attempt to silence him by nailing him to a cross.

I cannot say that I believe in the physical resurrection of Christ. It was not the absence of a dead body but the presence of the living Christ that empowered the disciples to turn the world upside down. The exact nature of the resurrection experiences of the disciples I do not pretend to know. Paul, who gives us the earliest written reference to them, indicates no difference in kind between the experiences of Jesus' disciples and his own experience, only an added degree of awe that the experience had been his. But the conviction that Christ lives is the most important tenet in the Christian religion for without that conviction there would have been no Christian religion.

Probably Paul was the first Christian who had to deal with that vexatious question: How are the dead raised? I cannot agree with all his arguments but I do agree with his thesis, viz., that we need not trouble ourselves over the preservation of the physical because the eternal values are spiritual (I Cor. 15).

IV

And spiritual values are eternal. We cannot prove that the soul (or personality, or personal consciousness) continues after death. We can, by an act of faith which rests on the character and purpose of God as revealed to us, assume that personal values which have been developed in this world through suffering and pain are not simply futile strivings that dissolve into nothingness with death. But what of those who in this life have chosen deliberately to follow their own selfish interests, who have chosen the evil rather than the good? Are there any values within them which make it important or necessary to carry their souls beyond death? In short, is immortality conditional? God alone must be the judge. But here again, my faith in the goodness and purpose of God, whose will is that not one of his children shall perish, and my faith in the power of God which, while it may be frustrated for a time, cannot be defeated, give me the assurance that eventually his love will break down the barriers which confine these souls and free them to be confined only by his will for them. As a matter-of-fact, if God were simply just and not gracious, all of us would find the account too heavy against us.

There have been, and are today, those who contend that the Christian life must originate through a climactic experience of self-surrender, which is so epochal that all previous experience was of one kind and all subsequent experience is of a different kind. That history records such

conversion experiences there is no doubt. But that without such an experience one cannot enter the Christian life is a fallacy which has caused much unnecessary grief and heartache to many who have in all humility sought to follow the Christ-way of life. In all of us the self looms large and all of us are in need of daily forgiveness and renewal of grace. Yet if one is blessed with godly parents, as I was, the *direction* of life is set before one is aware of it. The reality of a loving earthly father makes a loving heavenly father an early reality. And though obedience is not always unfaltering and whole-hearted, the lesson of obedience is very real.

Yet we know that not all of those nurtured by godly parents have continued in the Christian way. Is that because God chose to grant his grace to some and not to others? Not at all. If we can trust Jesus at all, we can trust him in this: that God's love goes out to ALL. Yet to respond to that love requires an act of will on man's part. So long as man places his own self at the center of his world he shuts himself away from God. When man makes God the center of his life then everything changes. His own will is no longer important. His one thought is to learn God's will and to do it. Sin is self-centeredness. Salvation is God-centeredness.

The perfect response to God's love is made and once for all, without any reservation or any return to the old "self-center." This was Jesus' response. History reveals that, by and large, human beings have to learn the hard way. Some never learn. Others prefer to direct their own lives until they bump up against an impregnable barrier. Still others commit their lives to God's direction but reserve the right of veto. It is the use of this veto power which results in restlessness and waste of energy which should be directed into channels of creative activity. The veto is self coming to the center and it is the reason for our need of daily repentance and rededication.

There are means whereby we can keep our hearts continually repentant and humble and so have God's grace continually renewing our lives. These are: Bible study, private prayer, corporate worship, Holy Communion. That God's grace is available only through these means, I would deny. That God's grace is available for all the contingencies of life through these means, I can testify.

V

I believe that the Bible is God's word mediated through human beings who were committed whole-heartedly to selfless service of God. The record of the revelation of God which came to these men is important to us. I do not believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible or in the plenary inspiration of the Bible. I do not believe that it can be used as a scientific textbook or that all its historical details are true. I deplore the use of portions of the Bible as proof-texts. I believe that the Bible can be understood best and so can be of greatest value to us when it is studied in its proper historical setting, for: (1) it shows God's revelation of himself in history and most of all in one human life within history; (2) it shows the faith and courage of those whose faith and courage came from God alone; and (3) it shows how God's sustaining grace has carried men over rough places and through deep waters. Thus it offers to us inspiration to launch out into deep waters with faith and courage that God's sustaining grace will carry us through.

I believe that prayer is as essential to a continuing Christian life as breathing is to the physical life. There are many books devoted to the study of prayer; the psychology of prayer, the technique of prayer, the art of prayer, etc. These are worthy of study and they may be helpful in opening new vistas for the prayer life. However, the soul which does not venture forth on its own in prayer will never know the fullness of the joy and peace of living within the stream of

God's good will and good purpose for his life. It is through personal communion in prayer that man relinquishes his own will and accepts the will of God for his daily living. Jesus' disciples recognized that in prayer he found the energy and purpose for his life. They wanted to know the formula—but there is no formula. It is well that we do not have a verbatim record of Jesus' prayers: we would misuse them as we so often do his prayer in Gethsemane and "the Lord's Prayer."

But the Lord's Prayer offers a guide for our own praying. Should we pray for material things? Here Jesus answers "yes." But we can count six petitions in this prayer-outline and only one of them is for material things—and that for but the immediate necessities. The other petitions are for gifts which only the humble heart can receive. The prayer directs our attention to something which we too often ignore. It begins and ends with adoration. This adoration which Jesus suggests as the beginning and end of our prayer is the necessary discipline for the humble heart. And yet if adoration is given as discipline, it were better that we withheld it. It is in adoration that the soul forgets self and centers upon God so that God's will may become effective in his life. When the soul is centered upon God the petty things of life assume their proper proportions and the unessentials drop away, thus bringing out in bold relief the truly important.

VI

In the Christian religion corporate worship is given a large place. Corporate worship is one of the chief reasons for the existence of the Church; in fact, it seems to have been the first purpose for which the early Christians met together (Acts 1:14). Corporate worship is not a substitute for private prayer, and certainly private prayer does not suffice where corporate worship is indicated. In a fellowship of prayer, where a group acts with common purpose the spiritual power engendered in the group far exceeds the power of all individuals participating in the act of worship. But for such spiritual power the worship must come from the heart, not just from the lips. And so we find that some congregational worship is cold and lifeless and some is warm and life-giving. We who have the responsibility of nurturing Christians in the things of the spirit cannot escape the responsibility for the quality of the corporate worship which we direct.

One of the earliest acts of corporate worship was the breaking of bread together. In some form or other this act of worship has continued down through the centuries. The act has had many different interpretations placed upon it. While it is the only act, save baptism, which is universally accepted as a Christian rite (one will have to except the Quakers) it is the greatest cause of division within the Church today. While I do not hold with the Roman conception of the Mass, I do believe that Holy Communion is a potential means of grace which too often is ignored. Luke says that the early Christians broke bread with "glad and generous hearts, praising God" (Acts 2:46). The very word "eucharist" means thanksgiving. Paul emphasized the memorial aspect but he did not forget that the memorial was of a sacrifice. In the communion around the table of our Lord, we can catch anew the vision of God's forgiving love in Christ. Thanksgiving for God's great gift is followed by the humiliating sense of our own failure to reflect Christ in our living. But repentance and confession are followed by a sense of the Divine Presence which compels us again to offer our lives in obedient service and we leave the communion table adoring God for his great goodness in accepting us.

There are many institutions organized for good purposes and worthy of our support; the Church, too often, is only one such institution. I believe that the Church is a divine institution when and so long as its members (jointly and severally) keep God at the center in all that they do. It was after the descent of the Holy Spirit

that the weak and timid disciples of Jesus became the First Christian Church. They were ineffectual nonentities, runaways, cowards; but they had in their hearts a vision of their beloved leader and a faith that he lived and would make himself known with power. And so he did. And so they were transformed from a group of individuals into a body which functioned with power. Still today the proper abode of the Holy Spirit is the Church, the body of Christ.

VII

The Church, when it fulfills its function properly, draws people together for the worship of God, for fellowship and mutual encouragement, for education and growth in the things of the Spirit. It is not composed of perfect people but it is in a very real sense a "Fellowship of saints" —very human saints.

The Church is the channel for carrying the gospel from age to age, and the interpreter of the gospel for each succeeding age. For this age, if ever, the gospel must be interpreted on a world scale. The Church today must speak with authority if the world is to be saved from the morass into which it is sinking from the weight of its own sin. The Church needs to confront the world with the faith that God's will guides us from chaos to order, from war and destruction to peace and construction; that only as we seek to know and do his will can we achieve harmony among nations. The Church needs to confront the world with the faith that love is stronger than hate; that mutual goodwill and helpfulness among nations can secure for all what each now is trying to secure for itself alone. The Church needs to confront the "sovereign" nations with the faith that God created man in his own image; this means all men, not simply one nation or a favored few. The Church needs to confront all groups and classes who are organized to further their own interests with the faith that brotherhood is as truly God's law as is gravitation.

Such an interpretation of the gospel for today would carry the Church into every phase of the life of the world. Wherever there are conditions which frustrate God's outreaching love or obstruct man's response to it, there the Church should be.

If the Church is to speak prophetically against the new and intensified evils of modern life, there are certain conditions within itself which must be met. The first condition which must be, I believe, is a condition of repentance. The Church must repent in sackcloth for the share it has had in the present world fiasco. Then the Church must confront itself, its own members, with a call to renewed dedication to a life commensurate with their vows. It needs to launch out into the deep of self-forgetful love. The whole community of Christians needs to experience a new fellowship of the Holy Spirit so that *together* it can live the gospel which it preaches. This means that the Church must become more truly a worshiping fellowship. It must turn its face toward God completely that it may turn its face toward man more truly.

The outward divisions of the Church are a grave hindrance to this fellowship. They weaken its message of love and brotherhood. I believe that the World Council of Churches should be given whole-hearted support. It is a unifying organization which, in the not too distant future, should be able to draw together the world Christian community. When the ecumenical Church becomes more than a mere dream, when it can speak authoritatively for Christians around the globe, then governments and peoples will bow to a force more potent than the force of arms. The Church will be in truth the conscience of the world.

VIII

If God is infinite in love and in goodness and if his will controls and guides the universe, why is there so much of suffering and of evil in the world? Some

suffering easily is discerned to be the direct result of wrong-doing and we, in our readiness to judge, label it "punishment for sin." But there also is much wrong-doing which seems to us to go unpunished. And there is much suffering which appears in our eyes undeserved. The good things of life seem to fall on the just and the unjust alike; so also the evils of life are borne by the good as well as by the bad. Why?

I think the priestly author of the Genesis legend had the key to our problem. "When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was a desolate waste, with darkness covering the abyss and a tempestuous wind raging over the surface of the waters" (Gen. 1:1–2).

God had to create the world out of chaos. Whatever there is today of beauty, of truth, of order, of law, represents his victory over chaos. But the world is not yet perfected; God is still at work. Since the world is imperfect, in the life of every person some suffering and some evil will come. Not all suffering is evil, some of it is the normal struggle of growth. But there is other suffering which appears entirely irrational and even beyond man's capacity to bear. God does not will such suffering; on the contrary he enters into the suffering and seeks to bring something good out of it. Whether good will result depends upon the response the sufferer makes to God. The most cherished values in life are the values which we see in character that has developed through the courageous overcoming of, or enduring of, evil. And the person who carries through such a struggle knows of a certainty that God is in it with him.

Whenever man works with God, he adds to the beauty, the truth, the order of the world. But all too often man adds to the evil in the world by his deliberate flouting of God's laws for his own selfish purposes. It is quite possible for man to bring some benefits to persons or to groups while acting from purely selfish motives. It is also possible for God to bring good out of man's evil. This does not lift from man the responsibility for his own evil acts. It does mean that God who is infinite in goodness will not allow his creation to defeat his goodwill. To me the death of Jesus on the cross offers a supreme example of God's ability to bring good out of evil even though he has limited his own control of evil by giving some of the control into the hands of man. I cannot believe that it seemed good to God that Jesus should die on the cross. But from the fact of Jesus' death, the disciples moved on to the realization that he was with them as a living Presence. The change in the disciples from the fearful runaways of the betrayal hour to the bold apostles of the following days was a major miracle. God had turned defeat into victory.

I do not believe that the evil in the world is due to any other person who is contending with God for supremacy in the world. Such a person either would have been created by God or would be subject to some other creator. In either case the result would have to be dual law, dual order, resulting in an intermittent, if not a continuous, clash. On the surface the conflict between good and evil in the world seems to be just that. Yet all the secrets which the scientists have unlocked for us reveal an order that points to but One Mind as the ground of the universe. And for the Christian the One Mind is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. With him in control, it is our faith that eventually will triumph.

The Chaplain's Study and Devotional Life

A Paper Presented on the occasion of the
Veterans Administration Branch No. 11
Field Chaplains' Instructional Meeting, July 22 and 23, 1946, Seattle, Washington

Chaplain John E. Frazee
Veterans Administration Hospital, Boise, Idaho

GEORGE ADAM SMITH, eminent Scottish theologian and divine, concluded one of his volumes by relating the experience of a certain group of Alpine mountain climbers. For days, they had struggled upward toward the coveted prize. They had endured privation and hardship, scaled dizzy heights, crossed storm-swept ridges, and spanned perilous depths. Now, at last, the day of their reward has arrived. It is early morning. The air is clear. The breezes are sharp. The men are within a few hundred yards of their goal. They crawl cautiously in the glow of the morning star-light. At length, the lofty peak is silhouetted against the fore-gleams of the new-born day. The very atmosphere is electric with anticipation. The object of their long and perilous quest is almost within their grasp. Its transcendent glory is about to be revealed—sunrise in the Alps!

Suddenly, spurred by impulse and impatient to throw off the restraints of caution, one of the party springs to his feet to make a wild dash for the peak. He is followed by one and another in rapid succession. Whereupon, the guide, aware of the unobstructed velocity and overwhelming power of the winds, gave the rope by which they were all bound together, a quick decisive tug, yanking them backwards, lest they be hurled into eternity. He shouted imperiously, "On your knees, on your knees!"

I

As we Chaplains undertake something worthwhile in the fulfillment of our calling, we must approach our work *on our knees*. If we are to comprehend the glory of the calling which is ours, it will be because we have been *on our knees*. The daily anticipation of some new and wonderful revelation of God's presence will be realized only as He finds us *on our knees*.

It was not for naught that Moses, when he came before the presence of God, was first admonished to take off his shoes from off his feet. Otherwise, the occasion of such a wonderful revelation would have resulted in a mere incident. The burning bush which was not consumed would have degenerated into a heap of gray, lifeless, meaningless ashes, instead of the vital inspiration which it was.

Had the disciples heeded the warnings of their Lord that they should watch and pray, the calamities which occurred that dark night might have been avoided. Had St. Paul failed to discipline himself, it is highly probable that after he had preached to others, he himself might have indeed become a *castaway*.

The Chaplain who neglects his own soul's needs will have nothing but a heap of burned-out ashes to offer for the inspiration of those he wishes to help. More tragic still will be the loss sustained by him in missing completely that joy "unspeakable and full of glory" which comes with the realization of God's presence.

I am indeed grateful that this particular subject—"The Chaplain's Study and Devotional Life," was assigned to myself. This is not because I feel competent to deal with it adequately, but because it compels me to face honestly my own short-comings and examine my own conscience, to discover whether or not I have failed to live up to the light that has been given

me. I am grateful also for this unusual privilege of sharing with you, my fellow colleagues in the Chaplaincy, some of the thoughts and practices I have found to be helpful which have grown out of my study of this subject.

Who is there of us who does not encounter daily the experience of our Lord when the hem of his garment was touched by the finger of faith? When He was thus approached by that poor, needy, helpless woman, he realized that the help which he had imparted to somebody was at a personal cost to himself. "Somebody hath touched me," said Jesus, "for I perceive that virtue has gone out of me."

What Chaplain is there among us who has not felt physically and spiritually exhausted again and again when, during a busy day, the demands of his patients have been so numerous, so urgent, so exacting and so insistent? It is at such times that we are brought to realize how insufficient, how inadequate we are. Virtue has indeed gone out of us and we are helpless to replace it of ourselves. Thus it is, in the first place, that the Chaplain must have access to some source of revitalizing power *outside of himself,* for the edification of his own soul.

II

Furthermore, if the Chaplain is to be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," as he is expected to be at all times and in all places, it is essential that he shall choose the *better* part, as did Mary of Bethany. While her sister Martha was to be commended for her industry in doing things for the Lord, Mary was engaged in the blessed privilege of *receiving* what he so freely offered, namely, Himself. Most of us are quite willing to work ourselves to the point of exhaustion, if necessary, in the business of doing things. Few of us are wise enough to choose consistently the better part—the art of becoming like Him by dwelling constantly in His presence.

If the countenance of the Chaplain is to radiate the glory of the Lord, as did the face of Moses when he returned to his people from the Lord's presence on Mt. Sinai, he must first of all practice the art of dwelling in God's presence. Among our patients, there are those who, like the Greeks, look for the Lord among His people where they have every reason to expect He should be found. The same demand is made of us Chaplains, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." Unless we first of all possess Him ourselves, we can hardly expect to be in a position to introduce Him to others who know Him not.

On this point, there should be left no room for doubt concerning the Chaplain. The evidences ought to be as unmistakable as those presented by the Apostles themselves. When the people observed the spirit which animated those early witnesses, "they took knowledge that they had been with Jesus." Think of Simon Peter, for example, the very shadow of whose person was a positive influence for good! Needy people received a definite blessing, by merely coming within the shadow of the presence of one who himself was overshadowed by the presence of his Lord.

Dr. Richard Cabot, beloved Boston physician and professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, on one occasion was asked by a pupil of his if he believed in the miracles of healing as recorded by the New Testament. Following a pause of several moments, the renowned teacher thoughtfully and reverently replied, "I never enter a sick-room without the feeling coming over me that did I possess a thousand times the personality I now have, I too could perform miracles."

To the bedside of the sick, the doctor brings his knowledge of medicine. The surgeon brings his skill, the nurse and the attendant bring their comforting arts, the librarian, the Red Cross, and the hundred other welfare agencies each brings its respective services. What, then, is left for the Chaplain to bring?

The answer to this question must, of course, be answered by each Chaplain for himself. It is essentially a matter of per-

sonal conviction. For my own part, I am unable to escape the finality of those simple, straightforward words of our Savior: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, ye can do nothing." As I understand it, the answer to our question resolves itself into this inevitable conclusion. The Chaplain is pre-eminently the one who brings Christ to the sick bed. He is the living Ciborium, or sacred vessel, in which our Lord is brought for the purpose of blessing his people. Apart from Christ, the Chaplain is little else than an empty vessel—a withered branch that has become separated from the life-giving vine. He has no unique contribution to bring to the relief of needy men.

To my brethren of the Jewish faith, who might feel compelled to take exception to this, I would reply by saying that so far as I personally am concerned, if the name "Jehovah" were to be substituted for the name "Jesus" in this connection, still the truth of the conclusion would remain the same.

The idea was brought home to me most strikingly, early in my career in the Navy. I was assigned to duty at the National Naval Medical Center. My senior colleague, of whom I was extremely fond, was a Roman Catholic. Whenever and wherever we met each other, it was the most natural thing for us to exchange greetings in a hearty, spontaneous manner.

Early one Sunday morning, I met him passing along one of the principal corridors of the hospital. I hailed him with the customary "good morning" and inquired as to what in the world ailed his arm. He paused long enough to inform me in a quiet, restrained voice that he was bringing the Blessed Sacrament to the wards. As for his right arm, which appeared to be in a sling, it became clear that such was not the case. His hand was hidden inside his blouse, holding close to his heart the Ciborium which contained the consecrated hosts. My friend believed that he was actually bringing Christ to needy sick beds. I was somehow convinced that he was not mistaken.

I believe also, however, that the heart of the Chaplain itself may become the sacred Ciborium, or cup, wherein Christ actually resides and by means of which He may be brought in a very real way to those who need Him. But if the Chaplain himself does not first of all possess Christ, he can hardly hope to share Him with somebody else. "Abide in me, and I in you . . . for without me ye can do nothing." Thus, I have endeavored to set forth my understanding of what the Chaplain's daily need is—the realization of the presence of the indwelling Savior. This wonderful experience is made available to the Chaplain through the discipline of his prayer life.

III

Back in 1931 there was published a treatise on the subject of prayer. Up until January of 1945, this little book had passed through thirty-nine (39) editions. The author, O. Hallesby, Doctor of Philosophy, is, or was at one time, professor in the Independent Theological Seminary, Oslo, Norway. In my opinion it is by far the most satisfying dissertation on the subject that I have ever read. The language is strikingly beautiful. The argument is convincing throughout, a masterpiece of logic. I most heartily commend it without reservation.

Professor Hallesby bases his thesis upon the twentieth verse of the third chapter of the book of Revelation: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Briefly stated, the author's argument is this. Prayer is a response to a situation of crisis. It is an acknowledgment of the presence of Someone outside ourselves who has come to offer His help. He has taken the initial step toward us. The next move must be a voluntary decision on our part. In the words of the author, "To pray is to let Jesus come

into our hearts. . . . It is not our prayer which moves the Lord Jesus, it is Jesus who moves us to pray. He knocks, thereby He makes known His desire to come in to us. Our prayers are always a result of Jesus knocking at our hearts' doors . . . to pray is nothing more involved than to let Jesus into our needs. To pray is to give Jesus permission to employ His powers in the alleviation of our distress. . . . To pray is nothing more involved than to open the door, giving Jesus access to our needs and permitting Him to exercise His own power in dealing with them. . . . Prayer is something deeper than words. It is present in the soul before it has been formulated in words, and it abides in the soul after the last words of prayer have passed over our lips."

IV

What is the technique by which prayer is thus exercised and the door opened? Here again, every Chaplain must decide for himself. Each one will use his own method—the one which, after experience and experimentation, has proven to be the most effective.

Speaking for myself, I have experimented at considerable length over a period of not a few years. Even yet, however, I am not at all sure that I have found the technique of response to the knock on the door, besides which there is none other. Of this I am reasonably certain, that the devotional technique which I now follow proves to be most effective in meeting my own spiritual needs.

As I grow older, I long more and more for a certain definite unity of spirit among spiritually minded people. I yearn for a more inclusive fellowship for believing Christians. This feeling was accentuated during my Navy experiences. Separated, as most of us were, from the intimate fellowship of those who thought, felt, and acted as we did in spiritual matters, for the first time I was associating with those who thought, felt, and acted quite differently. Yet, despite those diversities, I was aware of a wonderful, new fellowship which was being substituted for the old. Among my new associates, I was delighted to discover choice characters with whom I had never had any previous occasion for contact. This new experience of discovery, in my opinion, was the greatest single blessing born out of the travail of that frightful war. Isn't it too bad that such a demonstration of hatred and blood and tears was necessary before real tolerance, sympathetic appreciation, abundant good-will, and unselfish love could become possible among good people of differing faiths!

Since such was the case, I began to realize that this new fellowship was born at a terrific cost. More and more I have cherished the hope that it might survive the post-war hazards of apathy, disinterestedness, suspicion, selfishness, and bigotry.

Among other things, my spiritual integrity demands some sort of a basis for the continuance of that fellowship. Now that we have become more or less segregated once again by the old established barriers of isolation, I long more than ever for a share in the blessings of the larger fellowship.

It was out of this longing that some months ago I was led to undertake a new form of discipline, a new technique, a new manner of "response" in my daily devotions. Having procured a copy of *The Catholic Missal,* I have joined day by day in fellowship with the people of Christ the world around who are reading the same inspired passages from the word of God. Today, for example, millions of Christians everywhere, including my many Catholic Chaplain colleagues of my Navy days (the memories of whose friendship I shall never cease to cherish) have read two choice passages of scripture. First of all, there is the *"Epistle"* for the day—First Peter 5:1–11, an inspiring passage, filled with practical council for all pastors, including Chaplains! Then follows the *"Gospel"* for the day—Luke 22:24–30, those sublime utterances

of our Lord concerning true greatness! In addition, there are shorter selections from the Book of Daniel, the Gospel of Matthew, and Psalms 88 and 109.

Thus, within a year's time, many, if not most, if the excellent passages of both the Old Testament and the New are introduced. From day to day, the reader anticipates some new delight. Each day he unites with that unseen fellowship of those who everywhere share in common with each other the same blessings derived from a common source. To me, this is a most uplifting and inspiring realization.

V

Concerning the time that is best suited for personal devotional exercises, there is no question but that the early morning hours are the best—because they usually find us at our *best*. The best of our time and the best of ourselves should be devoted to such an important obligation. Before our associates break in upon our time, before cares and duties distract our attention, and before fatigue takes its toll upon our state of alertness, we should and must get off for a good start, by seeking God *first*. The knock on the door must receive some sort of an immediate response.

At this point, the choice little poem of Bishop Ralph S. Cushman, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, is à propos. It is entitled, "The Secret."

I met God in the morning
  When the day was at its best,
And His Presence came like sunrise,
  Like a glory in my breast.

All day long the Presence lingered,
  All day long He stayed with me,
And we sailed in perfect calmness
  O'er a very troubled sea.

Other ships were blown and battered,
  Other ships were sore distressed,
But the winds that seemed to drive them
  Brought to us a peace and rest.

Then I thought of other mornings
  With a keen remorse of mind,
When I too had loosed the mooring
  With the Presence left behind.

So I think I know the secret,
  Learned from many a troubled way:
You must seek Him in the morning
  If you want Him through the day!

But it must not be imagined that one's prayer life or devotional study habits should be restricted to a comparatively few moments in the early part of the day. Like Brother Lawrence, we too should learn to *practice the presence of God,* throughout the entire day. Many, many knocks will be heard at the door, calling us to secret prayer. These will be heard frequently as we perform the routine, incidental duties of the day. The myriad of tasks must never be allowed to become perfunctory. Each one should be performed as a "sacrament," *to the glory of God.*

Concerning this all-important consideration, there is a very suggestive chapter in *The Art of Ministering to the Sick,* by Dr. Cabot and Chaplain Dick; which book, by the way, is on our Selected Bibliography sent out by Central Office. The chapter by Chaplain Dick to which I refer, has to do with the so-called "sacraments" of the sick-room. Everything that is done for the comfort and well-being of the patient, and everything that he is encouraged to do for himself, should be recognized as constituting significant signs, or symbols. The Chaplain should help the patient to feel and understand what those realities are which are symbolized by the hundred and one things performed in the sick-room. Thus, in one way or another, the Chaplain's devotional life is, or should be, one continuous process.

VI

Similarly, if the Chaplain is to become a master workman in the fulfillment of the implications of his high commission,

he must actually "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The Chaplain must, by the nature of his calling, be "all things to all people." He must study the people of his care. He must be able to put himself in their place. He must be able to see life from their perspective. He must, in so far as it is possible, live their lives with them. He must learn to deal with them at the point where life makes its greatest impact on their thoughts.

Here, let me strongly recommend another excellent chapter in the book referred to a moment ago. Dr. Cabot speaks of that point of impact as *life's growing edge*. It is at this point that we come closest to those whom we are trying to help, for that is where they actually are. Their thoughts, their dreams, their interests, their concerns, their aspirations, their whole selves are centered upon their respective growing edges.

It seems to me that this is what the apostle Paul must have had in mind in offering that superlatively important advice to young Timothy. We too, as Chaplains, must pursue our devotional studies in the direction of life's growing edges. If our ministry is not to fall short of the mark, we must study people as we find them, and learn to deal with them where they are. We should be adept in the art of prescribing the "word of truth" to given situations. This requires that we shall become thoroughly informed in our knowledge of God's word as it is revealed in Holy Writ. It is required of us, that we shall become skilful also in applying its truths to life's growing edges.

Finally, we should not be ignorant of any extra-Biblical revelations of God's word. It is incumbent upon us that, in so far as possible, we shall inform ourselves of the latest and best findings in those fields adjacent to the purely "religious." I mean especially the social sciences. Some splendid books in the field of psychiatry, for example, are coming from the press in fairly rapid succession. Every Chaplain owes it to himself and to his profession to familiarize himself in the use of the tools made available to him in the Selected Bibliography. He should add to that list, works of other competent authorities. If he has not done so already, he should read one of the most recent contributions *Peace of Mind*, by Rabbi Liebman. This much talked of treatise will shock the conservative thinker. However, it will certainly stimulate him and all the rest of us to think in terms of the growing edges of life, as its impacts are felt upon the lives of the people of our care and keeping.

VII

"The Chaplain's Study and Devotional Life"—It shall be lived in accordance with the ancient promises of Almighty God, as set forth by the prophet Isaiah:

"Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

"And I will be found of you, *saith the Lord*."

Frank Chamberlain Porter: An Appreciation

Harris Franklin Rall, Ph.D., LLD.

Professor Emeritus, Systematic Theology, Garrett Bible Institute, Evanston, Ill.

FRANK CHAMBERLAIN PORTER, who died a year ago last January, had served Yale University for thirty-eight years as teacher of Biblical theology. It is a great privilege for a former student to bring a word of appreciation, first for the teacher, then for his contribution in religious thought.

Professor Porter had been serving at Yale for only five years when I first came to know him. He had already achieved the skill which marked him as a great Biblical teacher and the spiritual insights which made him a true theologian. He was a great teacher first of all because he was a great student. He brought to us the rich fruits of work in which he combined wide reading with clear thinking. He had the art of clear and ordered presentation. The notebooks from his courses had the rather rare distinction of being treasured and used by his students when they went out to preach or to teach. He dealt with fundamental matters. He gave from his rich store of knowledge but his chief service was to show his students the faith and ideals of the Biblical writings and then to help them formulate their own faith in the light of this knowledge.

It is Dr. Porter's contribution at this point that deserves special consideration. In our religious thinking we are coming to a new appreciation of Christianity as revelation and of the embodiment of this in the Bible. At the same time we are committed to the idea of historical development and of the critical-historical study of the Bible. How can these be united?

I

The traditional position here was very simple and the fundamentalists still hold it. Christianity is a religion of revelation. Revelation is the supernatural impartation of truth, of doctrines to be believed and precepts to be followed. The Bible embodies this revelation and is infallible in all its parts. As a matter of fact, though all schools and parties agreed in this idea of the Bible, each brought to the Bible its own theology and each carried away what it needed to support its position. There was no objective study of what the various writings actually taught. And since it was all divine and all true, you could quote as you wished.

Historical-critical study undermined all this. Except in fundamentalist circles, its right is now recognized by all. The Bible is a literature and must be studied as such. The literature is the record and the monument of a long historical development. We must study dates and authors and sources. We must relate all this not only to the immediate social milieu from which these writings sprung, but to the larger cultural environment. There is no "sacred" history insulated against all contacts with "secular" thought and movement. The Bible must be studied in terms of its human-historical-social character and not simply in terms of the one dimension, that from heaven to earth.

Historical-critical study, however, soon showed even more marked defects than the traditional method. Absorbed in the technical problems of literary analysis and historical development, the matters of deepest import were left to one side. The literature of a people is an expression of its life, and that includes its ideals and hopes and faith. That is peculiarly true of the Hebrew-Christian literature contained in the Bible. Its moving conviction is faith in a living God. To stop with authors and sources, dates and literary forms, is like presenting Hamlet with the Prince of Denmark left out. It is their

religious significance which has made these writings the subject of continued attention through the centuries. And Bible teachers as well as technical students were more and more by-passing this primary interest.

One other feature entered in with some Biblical scholars and that was a naturalistic philosophy. These men were quite as dogmatic in their method as were the traditionalists. They did not so much discuss this position as assume it. Not merely was the Bible to be studied in its human-historical relations, there was no other relation and so no other method of study if you wanted to be "scientific."

II

Against this background of fifty years ago—and of today—we can appreciate the character of Dr. Porter's work. He saw the need of historical-critical study. The whole of the Bible and every aspect of it was to be studied in this way. He saw these writings as literature, literature in development. But he criticized those who did not see what this history and literature really meant. Christian faith sees in history what is more than history. Better stated, it sees in history a plan, a living God carrying out this plan, and man as sharing in this with God. And these writings are not merely historical documents, to be criticized in terms of authenticity and accuracy. They are expressions of religious faith and life.

The most important matter, therefore, in Biblical study is not historical criticism or the study of literary form. Neither is it dogmatic or creedal, the effort to set forth the changing religious opinions or doctrines. It is to understand its religious spirit, its faith and life. For that reason it is not the codes or institutions or even the ideas that stand forth as of greatest interest, but persons: prophets in the Old Testament, Jesus in the New, and a man who embodied the spirit of Jesus, the mind of Christ, like Paul. Religion lives in persons and it is in the lives and words of such persons that religion challenges us, commands us, and liberates us.

From this standpoint Dr. Porter challenged what was a common assumption among critical students of the Bible, the need of a purely objective, "scientific" approach. Humility, an open mind, a sympathetic interest which seeks to understand these men, a personal concern—these are needed if we are to know what the Bible really is. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. That means truth, beauty, love, mercy, justice, God—and these are the great themes of the Bible.

III

But the appreciative approach does not imply an uncritical attitude. Dr. Porter considered himself a liberal—that meant the free and open mind. He was, in the true sense, a radical—he insisted upon getting to the root of truth and life. He declared that the Bible was a liberal, a radical book. He criticized the Bible in the name of the Bible. The prophets were critics of the religion which centered in the temple and the letter of the law and an exclusive position for Israel; theirs was a religion of the spirit, ethical and universal. Our study of the Bible demands a critical and discriminating evaluation.

Dr. Porter carried that over into his study of the New Testament. Here, as in the Old Testament, he found two religions. One tended to set Christ apart from His brethren, to conceive Him primarily in terms of the expected Jewish Messiah, and to think in apocalyptic terms of a coming kingdom. It made Christianity a way of belief instead of life. Christ became for it in the end a puzzle to be solved by speculative christological theories rather than the answer to human needs. For the other the decisive matter was the person of Jesus, not theories about his person. And the crucial matter with reference to Jesus was the spirit of love which was in Him. This, in Paul's phrase, was "the mind of Christ."

Our final task in relation to the Bible, as Dr. Porter saw it, was to choose that religion of the Bible which we find to be true. The historical task is, in his words, to find what is truly in the Bible; the theological task is to find what is true in the Bible and to make this truth your own. For Dr. Porter the true viewpoint was the prophetic religion of the Old Testament fulfilled and completed in Jesus. To know Jesus, to share the mind of Christ, that is, His spirit, to think of God and all else after the mind of Christ, to see the glory of God in His face, to live after His spirit of love, this is to be a Christian, this is what is true in the Bible. Dr. Porter found in Paul the true interpreter of Jesus. He set forth his interpretation of Paul and his own position in his volume on *The Mind of Christ in Paul.* With that should be compared his theological autobiography as found in Volume II of *Contemporary American Theology.*

IV

We are not concerned here with the critical estimate of Dr. Porter's position. It is obviously opposed to the critical left and the theological right of today. But while he did not develop it systematically, his central contention is clear and convincing. All high religion holds that in some real and ultimate way goodness and power are one. Christianity asserts that this Power is Person and that this goodness comes to us in Jesus Christ alike as revelation and as transforming power.

This paper may well end as it began with a personal tribute to the man. He was not only a great scholar and teacher; he was a Christian. In a tribute to his father he speaks of "a religious life and spirit marked by a rare wholesomeness and genuineness, without dogmatism or formalism, deeply emotional but restrained, and always with the soul of sincerity and humility." No words could better describe the spirit of Frank C. Porter. His students used every persuasion to get him to publish more of his work. He had given years to the preparation of a work on New Testament times. He had a completed manuscript on *The Bible and the Religion of the Spirit.* But his humility, on the one hand, and his high ideals, on the other, restrained him. His vision of the truth outran the formulation. But all his thought and toil went to enrich his own heart and mind, to be poured out in turn for his students. He might have said with Paul, "You are my epistles." In them he lives on and works on, and the student who writes these words knows how inadequate they will seem to those who sat under him, as, indeed, they are to the writer.

Report of Seminary Visitations to Department of the Ministry

The Rev. Frederick L. Fagley
Director, Department of the Ministry

SINCE our last meeting I have visited four seminaries, Oberlin, Eden, Chicago and Pacific. At Oberlin I found twenty students preparing for Congregational Christian ministry, which is an increase of eleven over the year preceding. Four of these are student pastors doing part-time work and three are preparing for mission service.

They are a very promising group. The Seminary buildings are ample and gracious and the faculty first-class. Professor Owen is a noteworthy addition to the faculty as he brings to the aid of young pastors the experience of successful ministry and ripe scholarship in the field of practical theology and social ethics.

At Chicago there are thirty-four students preparing for Christian life service. I met with a group for an hour's discussion under the guidance of Professor Alderton, and later spent the rest of a most interesting day in individual conferences. Here the students have available the rich resources of all four theological schools in the Federated faculty and also those of the University of Chicago. As is well known, the buildings are superbly suited for study. President A. C. McGiffert has matters well in hand and is giving most efficient leadership. He is very much aware of the problems of present-day theological education.

At Eden I spent a pleasant hour with the President and an unhurried afternoon with Professor Wherli in discussing our common problem to my great advantage. There are at present no students at Eden preparing for ministry in the Congregational Christian churches. The Seminary, with its beautiful campus and splendid new buildings, furnishes an ideal environment for work. Most of their students come from their two colleges, with by far the larger number from Elmhurst College, from which most of their faculty also have come. So the Seminary has a warm family atmosphere.

At Pacific the influence of President Ronald Bridges was everywhere in evidence. Here is a superb location, fine buildings and the University of California located in the Seminary's front yard. What an environment for study! I had dinner with ten students preparing for Congregational Christian service with former Chaplain Corwin Olds, now assistant to the President, as monitor. We had a profitable evening and the next day I was in residence meeting students for unhurried conversations.

From these visits I can generalize briefly:

1. We have available the finest possible physical plants for adequate seminary training.
2. The library facilities for our Seminaries are excellent.
3. The faculties are composed of men who have gained distinction in their various fields.
4. The curriculums cover a very wide range of professional and cultural courses.
5. Considering the sort of work the students will face in Service, I might wish that the whole field of Evangelism were more emphasized; how Jesus dealt with men, how faith is kindled and nourished, etc.
6. I still find little in Protestant theological training in the field of what the Roman Catholic Church calls moral theology. When we are told by Catholic priests that in their seven-

year course of study almost as much time is given to moral theology as to dogmatic theology, we realize how far short our educational process comes to fitting young men to cope with life as they will find it.

7. There is much pressure on Seminary administrators, especially from returned chaplains and G. I.'s, for courses in counseling. I feel sure our Seminaries are wise in not too greatly enlarging this phase of the curriculum, at least until trained and experienced leaders are available. The dangers here are manifold.

8. Quite a few students are greatly enamored of some form of social action, international relief and similar pursuits. Others are looking forward to a short period in pastorates, than other service. The glories and rewards of the parish ministry are too often tarnished by the all too evident handicaps and hindrances. It might help if our Seminaries could maintain a lectureship enlarging on the opportunities and rewards of a consecrated parish ministry. I was gladdened by meeting so many who are preparing for foreign-mission service.

9. It is quite evident that we need a far larger number of Seminaries for the future of our churches. From the present number we cannot expect more than one-third of our annual need for new pastors.

10. In conversation with the students it is abundantly evident that the major number have been influenced to decide for the ministry as their life work by some pastor who took a personal interest in their future.

11. At every point your representative was welcomed by faculty and students, and the fact that the denomination as a whole was interested in them was news, and may I add welcome news.

Seminary Students of 1945–1946 preparing for Service in Congregational Christian Churches (1)

	Enrolled 1945–1946	Continued in 1945–1946	Discontinued	Ordained	Serving Church	Other Schools	Dropped Out	Unknown
Andover-Newton	16	5	11	6	2	—	3	—
Bangor	27	21	6	8	2	2	2	—
Chicago	40	17	23	8	7	4	4	—
Union	20	10	10	3	—	4	3	—
Pacific	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Harvard	7	2	5	1	1	1	2	—
Oberlin	9	1	8	7	—	1	—	—
Yale	21	11	10	3	2	1	4	—
Hartford	16	6	10	1	6	1	—	—
Yankton	6	6	—	—	—	—	—	2
Duke	5	5	—	—	—	—	—	—
	170	87	83	29	20	14	18	2
	(2)	—	(3)	(4)	(5)	—	(6)	—
		51%	49%	35%	24%	17%	21%	2%
		% of Enrollment		% of Discontinued				

COMMENTS:

(1) This summary is for the school year September, 1945, to June, 1946.

(2) The number enrolled includes both men and women, full-time and part-time students.

(3) It is noteworthy that there is about a 50 per cent turnover yearly. It should be understood that some of the students listed in "total enrolled" included those who were in school only for refresher courses or for special studies.

(4) This is *the* figure for our consideration. Every year we need a minimum of 200 new men in the ministry. The total number from the 11 Seminaries to which we look for new ministers —29—is *only 14½ per cent of our yearly need!*

(5) These persons while not ordained are serving churches or doing other religious work.

(6) These persons have turned to secular work for the time being.

Concerning the Wisdom of Mortimer Snurd

The Editor

THE highly paid specialists who devise radio programs are not likely persistently to back a losing venture. The various and more or less variously gifted men, women, children and trained animals who (or which) go on the air know that they must please the public and please their sponsors or else go off the air into an unprofitable silence (theirs is one of the vocations in which silence is not golden). The technique, therefore, of the whole long-wave and short-wave business merits the consideration of all those who specialize in the actions and reactions of human nature—which includes preachers.

Everything for example has to be done with the voice, detached and, so to speak, disincarnate. The radio is a voice and nothing more. If it is a speaking and not a singing voice its range is limited, not too high or too low, nor too loud and always with a complete articulation. There is no help from seen stage setting, action, gesture or any such thing (the noises supplied as first aid to the imagination are negligible). All the emotions must be intonation, with only one instrument for drama, appeal, conviction, persuasion or what have you. What would happen to a sermon, say, if the preacher like the Cheshire cat in Alice's Wonderland faded out of the picture and only his voice was left there in the pulpit?

Radio preaching, of course, more or less answers that question. It can be done, is admirably done and there are those who contend that preaching will finally become all radio broadcasting and the pulpit *will* fade out of the picture. This for many reasons is very doubtful, but if one is not honored with a microphone he might by these tests profitably instruct his own preaching, trying to imagine himself a voice and nothing more. Incidentally, the editor knows a preacher who includes a recording machine as a member of his distinguished congregation. He may then in the silence of his study later turn it on and hear himself. That would be a perfect discipline, especially for extemporary preaching. It should be required equipment in the homiletic department of every theological seminary.

If a radio program, like Tennyson's brook, keeps flowing on, there must be something in it to explain its popularity. Rather high-brow magazines have been paying some attention to that question of late, though the conclusions of the writers are unfavorable to the overstuffed industry. The popularity of the Henry Aldrich family is, according to Bernard Iddings Bell (in the January *Atlantic*), exhibit A to prove the perennial adolescence of the American people, and a recurrent half-hour of judgment upon our schools, churches and whatever else should give some wisdom about life and save us from fatuity.

Certainly if radio auditors want what they are getting, their taste leaves a good deal to seek. If the promoters are forcing it on them, they are debasing the coinage of American intelligence. But for all that if a program proves a long-time winner, snowed under with fan mail, there must be a reason why.

* * *

If the *Atlantic* is willing to give space to the Aldrich Family, the MINISTER'S QUARTERLY is in good company when it gives some of its equally valuable space to Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snurd. (The first draft of this particular composition was written before the editor read Bell. That entirely capable essayist simply encouraged him to go on.) Well, there must be a reason why Charlie McCarthy outlasts a world-war and Snurd has become a national figure. Bergen's marvelous art helps of course. It takes genius to make a dummy alive. Too often,

n the contrary, genius makes a dummy : itself—which in some ways is the psy-ology behind Bergen's technique.

But most flesh-and-blood people carry Charlie McCarthy around with them, ot in trunks but in themselves. For he one's otherwise inhibited self which ould like to talk back impertinently and ake "wise-cracks" and say "O yeah" which begins to be dated) and tell people hat one actually thinks of them. Good nners (and McCarthy has none) gen-ally forbid such expressions. But they e part of the hidden fabric of our reac-ns to what other people say, and upon casion we envy that wooden caricature s uninhibited freedom of speech.

And Mortimer Snurd? He is stupidity arnate—which should give the wisest us some fellow feeling with him. upidity incarnate, that is, with one im-rtant and very saving exception. He ows that he is stupid, which is more less his particular wisdom. He does t know why, which is his mumbling norance. And in all this he is sadly e our Mortimer Snurd civilization, also th this humbling exception, it does not o freely acknowledge its stupidities nor o exhaustively try to find out why it is Mortimer Snurdish. (This is an ex-geration of course, but, in view of cur-nt headlines, possibly pardonable.)

The Oracle, Socrates confessed, had ed him as the wisest of the Athenians, t his only claim to superior wisdom, crates told the same Athenians, was s knowing that he was not wise at all! d that, like the fear of the Lord, is the ginning of all wisdom.

We collectively are such a baffling mix-re that any covering formula to account r our less intelligent ways begs too ny questions. "Original sin" served rmer inquiring generations, but "original "—and there have been few original s since old Rameses—needs a deal of ing apart and tracing up and down l out before it contributes much to our rification. We are still strange to our-ves and here at least we are akin to Mortimer. Alexis Carell's *Man the Unknown* was not hospitably received by the more conservative but it does at least shed some light on the complexities of conduct. At any rate we have at the best more sense than we use, and we ought to know why we do not use it and do something about it.

* * *

Dr. Fred L. Brownlee's *New Day Ascending* really started all this wandering approach to the still unsolved problem of human behavior via the race problem. He has written the history of the first one hundred years of the American Missionary Association in so good a way as to make praise superfluous. What the book relates is itself an epic in the bare telling of it, and Brownlee's telling is anything but bare. It is warm with the glowing sense of great things nobly done. It has light and color, a sure touch and balance and best of all the statesman's wisdom in its handling of the burning question of the relationship of white man and Negro in the United States.

After all the best way to find out how dark it has been—or is—is to turn on the light. The best way to let wrong tempers, stupid approaches and indefensible deeds condemn themselves is to show what right attitudes, tempers and approaches have accomplished—and their still unrealized potential. Over against *A New Day Ascending,* shown both by narration and implication, are all the stupidities of race prejudice made more puzzling by the recital, in contrast, of what Christian wisdom and goodness have done. These contrasts need no comment, they affirm themselves. Race prejudice seems one of the most persistent and incurable forms of Mortimer Snurdism. There are more reasons why than Mortimer is ever able to offer for his own minus intellectual quotients. The particular form of race prejudice with which the book deals has long ago ceased to be sectional, though the shadow of it still lies more darkly upon some regions than others. Brownlee supplies rather chasten-

ing contrasts between the attitudes of the "north" when most of the "freedmen" were south of the Mason and Dixon Line and the contemporaneous diffusion of race prejudice; — Christian intelligence whether a "problem" is hundreds of miles away or just around the corner. But race prejudice really belongs to the geography of the spirit. There are studies enough of its causes. Pride and fear naturally have a great deal to do with it and it is, amongst other things, the most delusive of superiority complexes. Brownlee's book reveals the only thing which will ever end race prejudice; — Christian intelligence and good will, implemented and in redemptive action. There are brave notes of assurance in it. The new day *is* ascending though it rises far too slowly and with disheartening recessions, and the sun seems too often to be standing still over that hard-contested valley of Ajalon.

* * *

The sector of entangled relationship which Brownlee has surveyed is only one exhibit of relative failures in vaster regions of human relationship which now girdle the globe and reach into the stratosphere. They are as massive as they are as yet unrectified. Perhaps "massive" is the significant word in that last sentence, though "corporate" might be better. Wherever and whenever people meet other people, individually one by one and just as somebody else, they usually get on kindly together, but when people, all sorts and conditions of people get organized into groups and get labeled or else label themselves, then the trouble begins—the whole matter of relationships would be greatly simplified if we could only get rid of labels. Group strength naturally creates group pride and group pride begins to create group aggressiveness. The group begins to tell the world how good it is, how safe to be trusted and how bad opposing groups are, and how they are not to be trusted at all, and all this goes on until the bonds of neighborliness get undone. Other people, say the wise, ought really to be thought of a persons and not as classes or colors, c labor or management, or as nations w neither like nor trust. For then always a misunderstandings and hostile interest gather force, the lines between the group are picketed or policed or surrounded b military cordon. The lines of communica tion are closed just when and wher understanding relationships ought to b fluid and free. Mortimer Snurd woul find it hard to match that.

Even Christianity could get that wa has occasionally gotten that way. The his tory of the ways of the more massiv religious bodies with each other is noth ing to boast of. Too much ecclesiastica power and prestige go alike to tonsure and untonsured heads. Nor is it quit certain that bigger groups are the answer —the Christianity of the gospels offer another way.

* * *

We are, they say who follow theologica trends, recovering a sense of the valu of the Bible. The current Andover-New ton Theological School *Bulletin,* in it extremely suggestive book-review sectio speaks very highly of the *Rediscovery o the Old Testament* by Howard H. Rag ley. The title is illuminating. It seem to imply that the Bible, and particularl the Old Testament, had become a lo book. That of course is an exaggeratio but the editor has long been wonderin how the timeless preaching values of th Old Testament particularly had so gon into eclipse.

That eclipse is certainly part of th record of the long transition period sin the turn of the century. Scholars lo interest in the apparatus of Old Test ment criticism. An excess of topic preaching edged textual preaching out o the picture and recent brilliant studies o Biblical textual values have natural stressed New Testament sources, and a the while the textual wealth of the O Testament is inexhaustible. One does n dare to say that the greatest preachir

s been from Old Testament texts, but at thesis could be pretty effectively de- nded. At any rate, not to wander too r from what might be the matter with time like ours, the Bible is, for our eds, the wisest of books because its sdom is a moral wisdom and it is just this region of moral wisdom that a ne like this seems most deficient. The imate judgments of the Bible are ght" and "wrong." There are gleams moral insight even in its most difficult ratives. It is itself a recitative of the velation of an always brightening moral ght. Here amongst so many other ngs is a sovereign value of the Bible r every time obsessed by its own inade- ate clevernesses.

It is not always easy to reduce what right and wrong in any region of con- ct to particularized detail. The more mplicated any situation is, the more ficult its moral adjudications become. it a right approach is the one supreme ntrol. We have on the whole more oral wisdom than we use. Right and rong have ways of proving themselves which all experience bears witness. eep too close to a difficult question and e gets lost in its fogs. The higher up e gets, the more clear and spacious oral visibility becomes. Jesus began th attitudes. If they were right, he id, the lesser difficulties would, as his llowers went on, resolve themselves. All which brings us back to the hope and omise of any "new day ascending" rough any of our darknesses. The merican Missionary Association is only e of many agencies seeking and finding Christian approach to racial problems. does have the distinction of having been pioneer and its century of history proves e rightness of the way it has consist- tly, courageously and sometimes sac- icially followed.

It helps us to understand from what arter we need to look for the dawn a new day in any field of human relationship and inside ourselves. "That was the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world."

* * *

All this has been slowly written—and rather shows it by its halting transitions—while Christmas and New Year's have come and gone and our regional weather has as usual made the headlines. It will be Lent when it gets read, if and as. Since April 6 will be Easter, February 19 should be Ash Wednesday. One can hardly believe it so near. The proper Commissions in our fellowship now supply so adequate and ample a Lenten literature as to make suggestion here blessedly needless. Worship and preaching have always reflected the perils, the needs, the hopes and dreams of their time since worship and preaching began. The great Litanies are petitions for deliverance, to which those who shaped them through the centuries were actually subject. Their content is constant. Their detail comes and goes, though with strange recurrences as though old perils and older sins could do no more than change their forms a little and reappear, without even having their faces lifted.

Lenten preaching this year is likely to be done to a noisy obbligato of political controversy, involving economic and social fundamentals in American life, not to speak of global affairs. It is difficult to see how creative preaching can fail to take account of all this and shape its message toward repentances, corrections and reconciliations, proper not only to the season but to all our encompassing conditions. There should be quietnesses for relief from strident clamors and some gleam of moral and spiritual illumination for a time which needs every light it can get. It is an august and humbling station to be even a halting voice of the moral wisdom without which all other wisdom is futile.

Missions Giving in Rural and Small-town Churches

The Rev. Robert C. Yoh

Pastor, First Congregational Church, North Troy, Vermont

THE percentage of rural and small-town churches within our denomination is large enough to form a solid foundation for Congregationalism in America. In the past some of our best leadership sprang from our rural churches: this may be true today.

Most rural churches are not well-to-do. They struggle to keep the Church of Christ a "going" concern. It is equally true that most of our small-town churches are finding it about all they can do to "make ends meet" financially. Yet, suspecting all this, I would make a strange plea—a plea that we, as ministers and pastors, re-think our missions program; hold it out in the light, shake the dust off, and the moths out, and then go on from there.

I have observed that many rural churches do not give much support to missions, either home or foreign. The reasons for this may be many. The lack of active support may spring from years of indifference. Ignorance of the missions program of the church is a primary factor. It may be, as I have heard so many rural pastors say, ". . . my people just are not missions-minded, and never have been; they just aren't interested." Very well. Perhaps they haven't been—perhaps they aren't. *But they should be!* And there is no reason why they shouldn't be vitally interested in missions. It is the pastor's job to see that they become interested.

We rural and small-town pastors make a grave mistake when we do not challenge our people to give to others. Of course it is a great temptation to fall back on the natural concern and pity we have for our economically insecure people and say, "Yes, but they are too poor to give." Too poor? Since when was any one too poor to share with others? Too poor! Was th widow's mite rejected?

No one is too poor to give to others True enough, it may well be that not muc money can be given—and yet a dollar year (or even a dime) is better than noth ing; and concern for the spread of th Gospel and of Christ's Church is impor tant. Prayers can be given. "More thing are wrought by prayer than this worl dreams of." Our people are even miserl with their prayers, and through no faul of their own, I suspect. They simply hav not been challenged.

Ministers in rural areas and in sma towns are busy people. Most of them hav more work than they can adequately han dle. Few rural ministers are lazy, or ir different. They know, most of them, th economic and the spiritual status of thei areas. They live close to their people, an know their problems and their trials an their joys as well or better than the peopl themselves. And yet the grave temptatio is always present for rural pastors to ur derestimate the potential "giving power of their churches. Too long have sma churches missed the radiant joy th comes when they are challenged to do job that seems hopelessly big, or are aske to raise a sum of money that just does n seem possible to secure. But, some rura small-town churches have literally bee "re-born" because they were challenged give above their usual small level.

There are few members or friends any church who will not respond to challenge, or a cause, or an ideal. Man a creature that must "do" somethin Every one wants to achieve somethir worth the doing. It is a basic law of lif 4-H Clubs have definite goals. They mal

ir young members feel as though they ve accomplished something, done some-ng, given something. Do our average ung People's Society or Pilgrim Fel-vship meetings do this? They should! r fraternal organizations (I speak as outsider) have an inspiring quality ut them. Some women will do for the stern Star what they would never do the church, simply because the East-Star has challenged them, and the rch has not. We simply *must* challenge people; shake them awake if neces-y; stir them with new vision; place a h value upon their efforts; expect and and much of them. For this is a true en if an out-worn) platitude: "a *giv-* church is a *living* church." It cannot otherwise.

No church is too poor to give of money, time, of talent, of concern, of prayer. hen we hear stories of mission churches Africa (where there is extreme mate-l poverty) giving money and sending t their own missionaries to poorer, more mote areas, we begin to feel ashamed of r own feeble efforts, and of our indif-rent giving.

I have heard some pastors of small urches say, ". . . my people have done ite well with missions this year; why, ey have given until it hurts!" (This al-ys followed by a smile.) And I am onished each time I hear this. Not as-hished that they have done quite well, d given—but astonished that it has urt" to give. I wonder about the quality such giving. Surely the giving could t have been done out of a vital, living nse of concern and love; it could only ve been done as a necessary job that had be gotten out of the way, and the sooner e better. Some one fell down some-nere along the line. If our people are ade to feel and to understand the great ed of the world, and to desire earnestly at the kingdom of God and of His rist be established in Africa, Asia, the ands of the seas, and even here at home, ey will never begrudge their giving; and ey will give "until it hurts," yes, but they will also keep on giving and giving until it no longer hurts. Only the challenge is lacking.

Perhaps we as pastors and religious leaders do not believe in the Kingdom of God strongly enough. Perhaps we have taken missions for granted. Be well assured that if we are luke-warm about the spreading of the Gospel to all peoples, our churches will be luke-warm, or perhaps stone-cold. But, if we are afire with enthusiasm for the whole missions enterprise, our people will catch our spirit, and they will look up, and become alive spiritually in a way that will surprise them and us, and they will give of money, of time, of spirit to the work of the church that is outside their own church walls.

What is Christianity? Even as a dead faith it is better than any other existing religion. As a living faith, it overcomes the world! We have failed our people if we do not challenge them—if we do not show them there is "a world laughing and crying" for them! These same people who will not turn a tramp away hungry when he appears at their door, will surely respond to the needs of a world that is hungering after bread to feed both body and soul! Perhaps we do not have enough faith in our people. If so, God pity us. Perhaps we do not have enough faith in the redemptive and life-giving power of Christianity. If so, God have mercy upon us, and forgive us.

We cannot depend on the missions tracts and propaganda our Mission Board publishes, fine as these materials are, to stir our people. We cannot depend on one "missionary" sermon a year to stir them. Each and every sermon each and every Sunday must be alive with the spirit of love, and of giving, and of sacrifice. The attention of our churches must be directed out-ward rather than in-ward. And, as we meet the needs of others, we find that we meet our own needs as well—for then our own needs become lessened, and our hearts become bigger, and we have gained much more than we have lost. We have gained a *living* faith. We have been "born anew."

Seminary Students Exchange

John W. Abbott
300 Weybosset St., Providence, R. I.

OUR American theological seminaries are thought-centers which should generate ideas into the currents of modern religious life. In spite of the relatively high level of contemporary communication, there is little opportunity to bring these currents together. Thus the articles in the first issue of the Seminary Students Exchange should provoke supplementary affirmation or rife disagreement from students in other schools. If these contributions are any indication, the theologue of today is concerned with developing an adequate theology *cooperatively,* with developing a sense of community in *all* social relationships, and in building a philosophy of that phase of the curriculum known as field work. Besides these subjects, future issues could well include more of the crucial problems which come under the analytical eyes o youth who are in training for a thinkin ministry.

Editorial correspondents are Mr. Wil liam Bradley at Andover Newton Theo logical School, Mr. Lawrence F. Smal at Bangor Theological Seminary, Mr Fred Berthold at Chicago Theologica Seminary, Mr. Lyman G. Potter at Hart ford Seminary Foundation, Mr. Jame F. McClellan, Jr., at Howard Universit School of Religion, Mr. Hollis S. Pistol at Oberlin School of Religion, Miss Hele Thomas at Pacific School of Religion Mr. William L. Graffam at Yale Divinit School, and Mr. Kenneth Biel at Yankto College School of Theology.

Contributions for the May issue shoul reach the Exchange editor by April 1.

J. W. A.

* * *

THEOLOGY

WHEN THE REAL THEOLOGY IS WRITTEN

Wilbur J. Wright, Chicago

Western culture may be on the skids. Some say it is and some say it isn't. At any rate there are frustrations aplenty experienced in every phase of modern Western life, economic, political, educational, religious, personal. Whirl is king, and divisiveness is the fruit of the vineyard that was planted with the hope of a harvest of progressive order.

Protestantism stands bewildered in contemplation of this surprise harvest, for "this ain't what it said on the package of seeds." Protestants are slowly awaking to the fact that their abiding four-hundred-year conviction that they carried within their movement the invincible power of the Gospel of Christ to redeem the world, has been in some regards onl a gloss over a more basic presupposition namely, that the individual has withi himself the power to redeem the world We have been more pagan than we lik to think. This is the morning after th night before and we are now uneasy abou the big night in which we must have bee (we can't quite remember yet) paintin the town pink, arm in arm with expandin Western culture.

The socio-economic myth which say that we can order the world by buildin (individually) a better mousetrap an having the world beat a pathway to ou door, is the first cousin to the religiou myth that we can order the world by de signing (individually) a better theolog and having all those who labor and ar heavy laden beat a pathway to the doo of "our" church.

Brother has been pitted against brothe building mousetraps. This has issued i

divisiveness and frustration of the npetitive economic system. The basic opia has been our demand from the in-idual of what by its nature and func-n must be a corporate product.

Prophet" has been pitted against ophet" building Protestant theologies. s has issued in the divisiveness and stration of the multi-segmented Prot-nt denominationalism and sectarian-. (Poppa Reformation wanted one ng healthy boy, and was a bit disap-ted when they told him early in the eenth century that it was twins. But to they have carried over two hundred s out of the delivery room and are still t, and the old man is about ready to t.) Here the basic myopia has been the -emphasis on the normative power of vidual insight. The belief that the in-dual can be saved without relationship he corporate body of Christ is the reli-us analogue to the economic belief that vided the ground for Vanderbilt's fa-us "The public be damned."

Mind, self, and society are an integral amic. Protestantism has begun to un-stand this. The ecumenical movement ects this growing sense of interdepend-e. More locally, workshops and sum-r conferences reflect the understanding t the processes of corporate signifi-ce can be learned only through corpo-e experience.

Yet in the face of all this we still write constructive theologies competitively individually. If ever anything should e corporate significance it should be theology of the Christian Church. nen the real theology is written, it will written in concert, by the Church— by the individual theologian humped r his Underwood, footnoting Baillie l Barth and tearing his hair not for rist and the Church, but for a deadline l an A, B, C, or D.

Why not a corporate attempt to pro-e a corporate constructive theology in seminary community?

* * *

TOWARDS BUILDING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

HIROSHIMA

Harriet Marot Taylor, Andover Newton

Until recently it has been the fashion to isolate oneself behind a choice barricade of ideas. Whatever cliché was chosen, whether it was communism, art, or biological determinism, a rich vocabulary was acquired whose end was to destroy the sense of community, and to enhance the very special point of view of a very special individual. Fortunately, this sort of thing is, to some extent, going out of style. The consummate cruelty of outlook which made it possible has borne its fruit of blind and bitter devastation, and a torn and maddened world is beginning the long, hard road back towards the sense of community.

A material contribution towards this new sense of community was made by the *New Yorker,* which devoted a whole issue to printing John Hersey's article on Hiroshima. In this he describes, step by step, how six of the individuals who survived the bomb passed through the ordeal, what they saw, and how they felt. It is a very simple, undramatic piece of writing. It tells what happened and leaves the fact alone to make a deep impression.

But while the usual satiric sections of the *New Yorker* are all left out, it has contrived perhaps the most deep and powerful irony of its career by leaving its ordinary advertising material to run alongside Hersey's story. The eye travels down through the woe and chaos of the people of Hiroshima in a river of print whose banks are composed of the usual extravagant and frivolous descriptions of cosmetics, furs, cocktail shakers, more cocktail shakers, more furs and more cosmetics. The result is a parable of human irresponsibility that makes the average easy-going pre-occupation with an easy-going existence look sick and cheap.

Perhaps the greatest line in Dostoevsky is the one in which he says that "we are

all responsible for all." Ideas have their place, and so have wealth and power. They are often the insignia of fruitful contributions to human welfare. But human welfare is not an abstraction. It is a concrete thing, which can only come to concrete, suffering human persons, each one vitally important in himself. To lose this sense of the individual human being, and, whether one agrees with him or not, one's infinite responsibility to him, is to lose everything.

This the suffering of these six human beings in Hiroshima can richly teach us. We need to recollect this new, powerful lesson of our chaotic world with every breath we draw, until the deepening stream of humanity drowns out the shallow differences of opinion, the unimportant sources of friction, the weak reliance on external possessions, and leaves us free at length to feel, in that soothing, precious depth, the love for each other which is the one secure, unshakable, unchanging reality which life can give us.

* * *

FELLOWSHIP AND THE COMMUNITY

David Barry, formerly of Chicago, now Director of Field Research for Protestant Council of Greater New York

I am interested to note on our bulletin boards some one's belief that "Fellowship holds the world together." In a world at present held together rather tenuously by cartels, power politics, and military alliances, it is a bit disturbing to think that we may be sending out ministers with this pleasant, but somewhat irrelevant, conviction. The sentiment is a worthy one, and may even reveal the will of God for man. But it is a hope and a prayer rather than an actuality. It is unfinished business, with only a meager report of progress from the committee it was referred to. We are not yet ready for congratulations from our Maker.

And it is a half truth. What holds people together? Almost any common in terest: babies, business, baseball, Buc dhism, or bureaucracy. Fellowship is pos sible with any common interest, even common appreciation of "Waltzing Ma tilda." But interests are also divisive people disagree over Matilda's merits. W are searching for something deeper, som thing we call community. A communit appears where a number of common in terests converge within a given grou where people share interests in jobs an homes and churches and schools that ar related; and a community is maintaine where the common interests take pr cedence over conflicting interests: for ex ample, where the maintenance of order more important in the scale of values tha is the inconvenience of a parking ticke

But even in a community, interests co flict, and there is a constant struggle ove whose interests the community shall or ganize to serve. The Nazis worked whol heartedly for a world community, but or organized to serve their ends; the Unite Nations, for obvious reasons, disagre The community is broken as these strug gles become overt.

The convergence of interests and pe ple making a community need not be acc dental; it may be intentional. The com munity may be and has often bee organized about a dominant interest, a a political or economic interest, th shapes subordinate interests. We have particular conviction that the religious in terest should occupy the central positio The idea is not new; Calvin tried it, an the mediæval church, and the elders Zion City, Illinois. But we have learne perhaps—that the religious concern ca not be formally dominant in a communit in, say, a position of political or econom power, and remain true to itself. If th claim of Christianity to social pre-em nence is its relevance to the whole of ou communal and individual life, its partic lar genius in the building of communi lies in its practice of understanding an good will, of sympathy and sacrific These are still surprisingly unexplore

eas of positive experimentation in com-
unity life. A guaranteed formula for
nthesizing Christian community remains
be discovered, and a little more re-
arch here might repay the efforts of
me one who wanted to take some of the
rden off the shoulders of God (who,
let you in on a little theological secret,
lly holds the world together).

* * *

[EDITOR'S NOTE: What are our semi-
ies doing to discover new bases of
mmunity? The Exchange would like
hear about it.]

* * *

HEORIES OF RELIGIOUS DUCATION

FIELD WORK AT YALE

William Lane Graffam

Yale Divinity School requires its stu-
nts to do religious Field Work. For
ny students this means responsibilities
church school which to some "very
rious," hard-headed budding theologians
ems a drudgery to be borne until the
ppy day when they can preach the
ospel and leave Christian Nurture to a
rector of Religious Education or their
ves.

Some few theologs, however, are be-
ming sharply aware of the growing im-
rtance of Religious Education in parish
ork and at the same time concerned
out the theology on which this Religious
iucation is founded.

The modern Sunday School Movement
as started during a great theological con-
versy over 100 years ago at which time
rotestant Liberalism was born. Liberal-
n and Religious Education soon be-
me interdependent, the theology justi-
ing the teaching of religion and the
nday School becoming the pedagogical
plement for the propagation of the
eology. A survey of most standard
oks on the theory of Religious Educa-
n and most curricula published by the
various denominations (*e.g.* The Graded Press) are founded on and in turn teach the great Liberal affirmations: (1) that God is the Unknown Power behind the Universe whose character can be discovered in the natural world but who leaves men to work out their own destinies; (2) that man is an innately good creature whose "sinfulness" is the product of adverse environment and complex psychosociological factors over which previously he has had little or no control but which with the proper education he can overcome; (3) that Jesus is the ideal human being and as such convicts other men of their moral sloth and self-satisfaction; and (4) that the Kingdom of God is a just social order, similar to Plato's Ideal Republic, which men must build in time and not expect to last into Eternity.

Many theological students are convinced that this Liberal interpretation of Christianity is both untrue to the real Christian message and hopelessly naïve and inadequate for our present world. The Sunday School teacher who jokingly remarked that working with a bunch of Juniors had convinced her of the truth of at least three orthodox Christian doctrines; the Utter Depravity of Mankind, Infant Damnation, and Salvation by Grace (nothing she could do could save those brats) was in her facetious way saying what theologians are saying after surveying the tragic events of the last twenty years.

Now in denying extreme Liberalism, theological students find they are undermining the very theological foundations upon which the Sunday School movement has been built. After seeing the fruits of this movement—a generation of enthusiastic, group-spirited, well-integrated young people with no practical knowledge of their supposed religion, a vague sense of personal devotion to Christ, conventional morals, and often nothing but the hollow name "Christian" to distinguish them from any other secular group devoted to the welfare of mankind—these disillusioned theologs are ready to tear

down everything which has been done in Religious Education in the last 100 years and build again on a new foundation.

They want to know if Religious Education must of necessity be bound up with outmoded Liberalism; if curricula cannot be designed to teach that (1) God is a Personal Creator and Moral Governor of the Universe who does not play hide and seek with man and wait to be discovered nor leave the world to its fate; (2) that man does will to sin, and not education but God's Grace empowers him to become "righteous"; (3) that Jesus is the Christ, the metaphysical agent necessary to the Salvation of mankind; and (4) that a transcendent Kingdom of God to be realized partly in time, ultimately in Eternity, is the purpose of the Universe.

Such a change in theology may necessitate a change in method in "teaching" religion; it may mean a return to dogmatic teaching and "dogmatic" has bad connotations for Congregationalists. But whatever it means some of the Congregational students at Yale are convinced that there needs to be some drastic rethinking in Religious Education. Before we concern ourselves much more with the proper use of visual aids and the techniques of progressive education (the washing of cups and pots) we had better rethink the content of what we are teaching (the weightier matters of the Law). What do others feel about this?

* * *

POLITICAL ACTION

ATTENTION, MARTIN DIES!

Fred Berthold, Chicago

The democratic upheavals which took place in China in the first two decades of this century centered, to a remarkable degree, in the universities. Much of the history of awakening democracy in Europe takes place on the university campuses. The fragmentary news of student revolts in Germany today leads one to suspect that the tradition of the students being the yeast in the political life of the nation is still very much alive, despite their failure to oppose Nazism in its early days.

The "ivory tower" is largely an Anglo-American institution.

It is refreshing to find in increasing numbers Student Political Action Committees and Committees on Post-War problems on our university campuses. These committees have already done some commendable things, and they seem capable, in many instances, of growing into a real power in the student life. It has been my experience, however, that these various committees often tend to become agencies dedicated merely to getting expert speakers to swell the sum of knowledge of those few "elect" who sit within the sacred walls of the meeting room—which is all right for a start. Even if a group is actively engaged in reaching out to the community, it acts with a feeling of isolation. There has been no attempt on the part of American students to coordinate their interests in a more democratic future for our nation.

At present, what group of students is in a more favorable position than we, the seminary students, to join together across the land to speak out for democracy in the specific issues facing our nation? What group should be more highly motivated? Over and over again I have heard prominent men say that the leadership the church is training is way out ahead of the ordinary churchgoer in his thinking about what democracy should mean in our nation. If this is so, our responsibility is certainly not being fulfilled by keeping those qualities of leadership under the proverbial bushel. We are in training for a profession which has sought its guidance in great principles rather than in any vested interests. As future leaders of this profession, we may well begin to practice translating those principles into life.

To be sure, there are vast differences across the land even among seminary students in the principles which they hold. But there are, I am convinced, a few

sic Christian principles which are our mmon treasure—that no man or group men, for instance, has a corner on the ght to a decent livelihood, and that no ce of man is innately inferior. Those inciples, even if there are no more than n be agreed upon, should be put to rk in every phase of life in our nation. e believe that. Why can we not stand gether as a force to make those prinles the yeast of our society? In isoed spots progress has already been de on these matters. Rumor has it t Duke School of Religion will soon the first Southern white school to admit groes. Such isolated action is adrable, but it is not enough. The semiy students of the nation must organize o a unit to wage effective political action sed, not upon personalities, but upon nciples.

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RELEVANT DIFFICULTIES IN THE BJECTIVE STUDY OF RELIGION

alter Bingham and J. F. McClellan, Jr.,
Howard University

There are several factors which serve point up the difficulty of studying reion objectively. Yet, many Churchmen agreeing that if the Church is to exist a strong social force in our society, it ust be examined objectively in the same nner as any other social institution. evertheless, if we attempt to examine igious beliefs, we are apt to be accused attacking religion, or of attempting to dermine religious convictions; for many ople, while maintaining that religion is most important force in life, guard eir religious beliefs as if they were litary secrets.

After a lecture on the Psychology of ligion, a certain college student once marked: "When we begin to analyze igion, we are lost. Psychologists say t a person of emotional maturity should able to hold judgment in obedience until he has determined what his new attitudes shall be. Unfortunately, when most people lose the 'faith of their fathers' they feel that nothing is left."

We wonder sometimes if this isn't really the attitude of those students of religion who resist the truths and insights into the nature of religion as derived from the objective method of study. Is it not true that the authoritarian method of discerning religious truths and values has so imposed itself on our consciousness that we find it hard to release ourselves from its shackles? Further, we wonder if the proponents of a continued authoritarian methodology of discerning religious truths realize that much of authoritarian theology, as conceived by the Church Fathers, was earnest searches after the truth in the light of the best information and data available during their time. It would seem that those of us who resist religious truths and insights, simply because they run counter to our preconceived notions, are not being true to the Church Fathers, who at least had the spirit of a searcher after the truth.

Moreover, the persons who become most perturbed about an examination of their religious beliefs seem not to be those who are thoroughly sold on their religion, but rather those who have some doubts of their particular "brand" of religion, and therefore are afraid to think through their beliefs. Thus, the difficulty of studying religion empirically is accentuated—because most people, tied up with their particular type of religious beliefs, lack the objectivity to conduct such studies.

This brings us to another difficulty in studying religion, *i.e.*, the problem of ridding oneself of denominational bias. Within the walls of interdenominational seminaries, we find an ecumenical fellowship; for within such schools, one is no longer Baptist, Methodist, Congregationalist, etc., but all are students engaged in an intellectual enterprise which has the truth as its goal. However, even in nonsectarian seminaries, denominational bias is to be mastered in some minds. Nevertheless,

such biases must be eliminated, for the objective study of religion deals with its overall aspects and not with particular denominations. Denominationalism is the business of sectarians.

Another difficulty for the student of religion is the problem of making exoteric, information which is received from the seminary. This raises the old problem of the practicality of theological subjects in parish work. Ministers who are confronted with the necessity of preaching to communities which have decided before they speak what the word of God should be, often fail to function with "intellectual honesty." Too often the sermons preached in Churches do not necessarily reflect the views of the ministers, for, even though they are well educated in many instances, they feel that they must elaborate over and over on those attitudes most desirable in the community.

Nevertheless, the lives of millions of people are influenced by religion. Even those who are not Church-goers, are affected by the religious beliefs and conduct of others. And those who are religious, have their whole pattern of life changed because of religious beliefs and ideals. Religion furnishes some of the most important motives in life. Thus, the objective student of religion, in spite of its difficulties and in all fairness to himself and the community he is to serve should not be limited by the authoritarian method of discerning religious truths and values, denominational biases, nor preconceived notions of the community.

In addition to the SELECTED LIST, the following books will be found of interest:

Huxley: *The Perennial Philosophy.*
Trevelyan: *English Social History.*
Perry: *One World in the Making.*
Trueblood: *The Foundations of Reconstruction.*
Cohen: *The Faith of a Liberal.*
Tasker: *Nature and Purpose of the Gospel.*
Smart: *The Spiritual Gospel.*

Lenten Litany

The Rev. J. Morriston Thomas
Ravenswood Congregational Church, Chicago, Illinois

Minister: For that wilful inhumanity of clay-footed gods has been overcome; for that "foxholes" are empty and the soldier is home; for that death-dealing ships have been swept from the seas,

People: Thanks be to heroic men, and to Thee, O God.

Minister: For that we wage and win wars and yet fumble a peace, peace which cost all our treasure with "blood, sweat and tears," is yet that over which we savagely bargain 'til peace is a mockery,

People: Grant us Thy forgiveness, Lord!

Minister: Millions upon millions are in the prison-house of blank despair; hungry and naked and homeless; open the eyes of our understanding and the springs of compassion; lighten not only our purses, but our brooding darkness, that we, who have so much, may again eat in comfort and walk in confidence.

People: Hear us, O Lord our God.

Minister: The flowers gleam in the foxholes, the lark sings again at dawn and the nightingale at eve, for Thy hand sendeth them; let beauty haunt the heart of man again; let the love and power of God inspire and instruct him, let the devotion of his leaders direct him, that we may learn a new song and exult in a new freedom.

People: This is our fervent prayer, O Lord!

Minister: Men have failed us; the kingdoms of the world have failed us; we dream of Thy kingdom, but as those who rub their eyes in disbelief. Bid us see, we beseech Thee, that it is the only kingdom which fits the needs of all this world; it is the only kingdom which translates dreams into reality, where "peace shall be like a river, and justice like the waves of the sea."

People: Thy kingdom come, O Lord, Thy will be done in earth. Amen.